

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 4226

S/NM FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE

IGA FOR TODD

DEA FOR EOI CUSACK

ARA FOR LUERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, MX

SUBJECT: MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL'S PRESS COMMENTS ON USG
NARCOTICS AID

REF: MEXICO 3483; MEXICO 2472

SUMMARY: ALMOST AS CONTINUATION OF EARLIER PIQUE OVER NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE CRITICAL OF GOM'S ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT (SEE REF A), ATTORNEY GENERAL MAY 14 MADE SEVERAL VERY STRONG REMARKS CONCERNING USG NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE. THESE REMARKS WERE IN RESPONSE TO ARTICLE WRITTEN BY EXCELSIOR'S WASHINGTON REPORTER, ALLEGEDLY BASED ON INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM USG SPOKESMAN. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MAY 13, INFLUENTIAL MEXICAN DAILY EXCELSIOR CARRIED (ON PAGE 22) STORY BY ITS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT RAFAEL RODRIGUE C., WHICH WAS REPORT CONCERNING USG AID TO GOM FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITY (SAME, BUT MORE MODERATE VERSION WAS CARRIED SOME OTHER PAPERS.)

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ACCOUNT CARRIED INFORMATION PURPORTEDLY OBTAINED FROM SPOKESMAN

FOR

"US ANTI-DRUG AGENCY," SAID USG WOULD IN FY 76 PROVIDE MEXICO WITH 11.6 MILLION DOLLARS IN NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE, OF WHICH UNSPECIFIED AMOUNT WOULD BE IN CASH, THE REMAINDER WOULD BE "TECHNICAL TRAINING, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL." ARTICLE STATED SOME MEXICAN FEDERAL JUDICIAL POLICE WOULD BE TRAINED IN DEA COURSES; ANOTHER PART OF AID WOULD BE IN EQUIPMENT, BUT SPOKESMAN ONLY SPECIFIED COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT. AS FOR PERSONNEL, SPOKESMAN ALLEGEDLY EXPLAINED WOULD BE US AGENTS WORKING IN MEXICO, BUT DID NOT SAY HOW MANY.

2. ON MAY 15, SAME NEWSPAPER CARRIED REMARKS BY MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL, MADE IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERIES FOLLOWING MAY 14 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR BREAKFAST. TRANSLATION OF ARTICLE FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT

"LET IT NOT BE SAID THAT WE ARE WORKING FOR ALMS." MEXICO PREPARED TO REFUSE THAT WHICH THE UNITED STATES IS OFFERING FOR USE AGAINST THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC: OJEDA PAULLADA.

BY JORGE REYES ESTRADA, EXCELSIOR REPORTER THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC, PEDRO OJEDA PAULLADA, DECLARED THAT, " IN ORDER THAT IT NOT BE SAID THAT WE ARE WORKING AGAINST THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC BECAUSE WE ARE RECEIVING ALMS FROM THE UNITED STATES, WE ARE PREPARED TO DO WITHOUT THIS COOPERATION," ALTHOUGH HE RECOGNIZED THAT "THE BUDGET OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HAS TO ATTEND TO OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS."

HE MADE THE FORMER REMARKS UPON ANSWERING A QUESTION RELATED TO THE AID WHICH THE UNITED STATES GIVES TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE IN ORDER TO COMBAT THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC AND HE ADDED THAT "SUCH AID IS PRATICALLY SYMBOLIC; IT IS VERY MINUSCULE."

LATER HE ADDED: "THAT QUANTITY HAS BEEN INCREASING. TO US THE AMOUNT IS NOT IMPORTANT; NOR WILL IT EVER BE IN DIRECT OR INDIRECT RELATION TO OUR ACTIVITIES." HE ALSO AFFIRMED THAT THE ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY THE UNITED STATES IS DESTINED

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FOR THE PURCHASE OF HELICOPTERS RADIO APPARATUS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT. "HOW ARE THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICAN AUTHORITIES COORDINATING IN ORDER TO COMBAT THE DRUG TRAFFIC IN BOTH COUNTRIES?" HE WAS ASKED.

"WE HAVE AN INTERCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES AND INFORMATION ON A PERMANENT BASIS BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES AND EACH TIME WITH MORE SUCCESS, BECAUSE WHEN A POLICE ACTION IS CARRIED

OUT IN MEXICO, WE ALMOST ALWAYS OBTAIN INFORMATION WHICH PERMITS THEM THERE (IN THE UNITED STATES) TO ARREST THE REMAINDER OF THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS OR VICE VERSA." "THIS HAS YIELDED VERY GOOD RESULTS," ADDED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

"TWO YEARS AGO I SAID THAT WE WOULD BEGIN TO DEAL STRONG BLOWS AGAINST THE BANDS OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS AND NOW I BELIEVE THAT IT IS CLEAR TO EVERYONE THAT WE ARE NOT DETAINING "BURROS" OR DESTROYING FIELDS OF MARIJUANA, BUT ARE HITTING THE COMPLETE BANDS, SUCH AS THAT WHICH WAS ARRESTED THREE DAYS AGO, FROM WHICH WERE RECOVERED LARGE QUANTITIES OF MARIJUANA, COCAINE, MORPHINE AND AMPHETAMINES. NINE OF THE TEN MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP WERE CAPTURED."

"I BELIEVE," HE SAID, "THAT IT WAS YET ANOTHER GOOD ACTION WHICH WAS ADDED TO THOSE WHICH WE HAVE REALIZED FROM JANUARY TO THE PRESENT DATE, AND WE ARE PRACTICALLY "PICKING UP" A BAND A WEEK."

"THE UNITED STATES GIVES MEXICO ECONOMIC COLLABORATION, AND I ONLY WISH TO ADD," THE ATTORNEY GENERAL POINTED OUT, "THAT WE HAVE ACCEPTED THE AMOUNTS WHICH THE UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTES ONLY AS A SYMBOL OF COOPERATION, AND THESE ARE VERY SMALL IN RELATION TO THAT WHICH OUR COUNTRY SPENDS AND TO OUR EFFORTS, NOT ONLY MONEY-WISE BUT ALSO IN LIVES AND ACTIONS." "MEXICO HAS CLAIMED FOR A LONG TIME NOW, AND IT HAS BEEN RATIFIED ON EACH OCCASION, THAT IT DOES NOT ACT DUE TO THE FACT THAT IT RECEIVES OR DOES NOT RECIEVE COLLABORATION FROM ANYONE." UPON SPEAKING ABOUT THE DONATION OF HELICOPTERS, RADIO APPARATUS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT, HE CONFIRMED THE FACT THAT MEXICO DOES NOT RECEIVE MONEY IN CASH BUT EQUIPMENT.

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LASTLY, HE COMMENTED THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE HAS TRANSFORMED ITSELF INTO A TRAINING CENTER FOR PILOTS FOR ALL THE REPUBLIC, SINCE NEARLY ALL THE PILOTS FOR THE VARIOUS SECRETARIATS OF STATE HAVE COME FROM HERE. THE INTERVIEW WITH OJEDA PAULLADA TOOK PLACE UPON TERMINATION OF THE BREAKFAST WHICH WAS GIVEN FOR HIM BY THE WOMEN ECONOMISTS IN CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR. END TEXT

3. COMMENTS: ATTORNEY GENERAL HAD EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN ABOUT FIRST ARTICLE DURING MAY 14 MEETING (ON ENFORCEMENT MATTERS) WITH DEA RD AND DRD. BUT THEIR IMPRESSION WAS THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN UNDULY UPSET OR ANGERED BY STORY. HOWEVER, NATURE OF HIS REMARKS REPORTED IN PRESS WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT HE HAD BEEN STUNG RATHER DEEPLY BY STORY FROM WASHINGTON, THAT HE SAW SOME POLITICAL LIABILITY FOR HIMSELF

RESULTING FROM IT, AND THAT HE FELT THE NEED TO RESPOND
IN STRONG TERMS TO MAINTAIN HIS CREDENTIALS AS A "BUEN (Y
PRESIDENCIABLE) MEXICANO."

4. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S ATTITUDE THAT USG AID HAS BEEN
SMALL AND MERELY SYMBOLIC OF THE COOPERATIVE EFFORT IS NOTHING
NEW, AND IN FACT MR TODD WAS EXPOSED TO IT DURING HIS VISIT
HERE LAST MARCH (SEE REF B.) WHAT IS NEW, HOWEVER, IS THE
STATEMENT THAT GOM IS PREPARED TO DO WITHOUT USG ASSISTANCE
RATHER THAN GIVE IMPRESSION GOM IS WORKING AGAINST NARCOTICS
TNLY AS RESPONSE TO THESE "ALMS." WE BELIEVE AG WILL
PROBABLY NOT TAKE SUCH A STRONG STAND DURING HIS WASHINGTON
VISIT, BUT FEEL THAT OFFICIALS THERE SHOULD EXPECT HIM TO
REFLECT THESE ATTITUDES TO AT LEAST SOME DEGREE.

5. WE, OF COURSE, HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW ACCURATE THE
FIRST EXCELSIOR ARTICLE WAS, AND WHAT USG SPOKESMAN (WHOEVER
HE WAS) ACTUALLY TOLD THEIR REPORTER. WE DO REGRET THAT THE
ARTICLE CONTAINED A NUMBER OF MISLEADING STATEMENTS, AND
OTHERS HIGHLY SENSITIVE TO ATTORNEY GENERAL. WITHOUT PLACING
BLAME, WE WOULD ONCE AGAIN POINT OUT NEED TO CONSIDER MEXICAN
(READ AG'S) SENSITIVITIES REGARDING ANY FORM OF USG
ASSISTANCE OR IMPLIED CRITICISM.

6. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY LIGHT WASHINGTON CAN SHED ON
SOURCE OF EXCELSIOR ARTICLE.
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